On Wednesday, March 12, 2008, The Domestic Policy Subcommittee held a hearing titled "Is USDA Accounting for Costs to Farmers Caused by Contamination from Genetically Engineered Plants?" The hearing will examined the impact on farmers caused by contamination of conventional and organic crops by genetically engineered plants. The hearing will also examine the responsiveness of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the concerns of farmers.

Genetically engineered (GE) crops have been permitted for field testing and commercialization in the U.S. since 1987. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is the primary regulator of the testing and commercialization of GE plants.

Market penetration by GE crops has become increasingly significant. GE corn, for instance, accounts for 74 percent of all corn planted in the U.S. GE soybeans account for 91 percent of all soy grown in the U.S,. and 87 percent of all cotton grown in the U.S. is genetically engineered.

Though USDA points out that contamination events are rare, when contamination has occurred, the consumer market, both domestic and international, has responded immediately and farmers have incurred large costs.

Witnesses for the hearing included:

Panel 1

Todd Leake, Conventional and GE grain grower, Emerado, North Dakota
Harvey Howington, Conventional and GE grain grower, Lepanto, Arkansas
Don Cameron, Conventional, organic and GE crop grower, Helm, California
Fred Kirschenmann, Organic grain grower, Medina, North Dakota
Colin Carter, Ph.D., Agricultural economist, University of California, Davis
Ray Clark, The Clark Group LLC, Washington, DC

Panel 2

Cindy Smith, Administrator, Animal and Plant Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Documents and Links**

- Testimony of Todd Leake
- Testimony of Harvey Howington
- Testimony of Don Cameron
- Testimony of Professor Colin A. Carter
- Testimony of Ray Clark
- Testimony of Cindy Smith
- Opening Statement of Chairman Kucinich